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The President's Daily Brief

November 12, 1976

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November 12, 1976

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Table of Contents

Rhodesia-Mozambique: [redacted] *(Page 1)*

25X1

Angola: The current offensive by government forces in southern Angola against guerrillas of the National Union appears to be the most ambitious effort so far on the part of the Neto regime to establish control over an area of the country in which it has no ethnic or political links. *(Page 2)* 25X1

[redacted] *(Page 3)* 25X1

25X1

[redacted] 25X1

Notes: USSR; Israel; Lebanon; France-FTAI *(Pages 6 and 7)*

At Annex [redacted] Italy. 25X1

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2016/07/19 : CIA-RDP79T00024A000300050001-1

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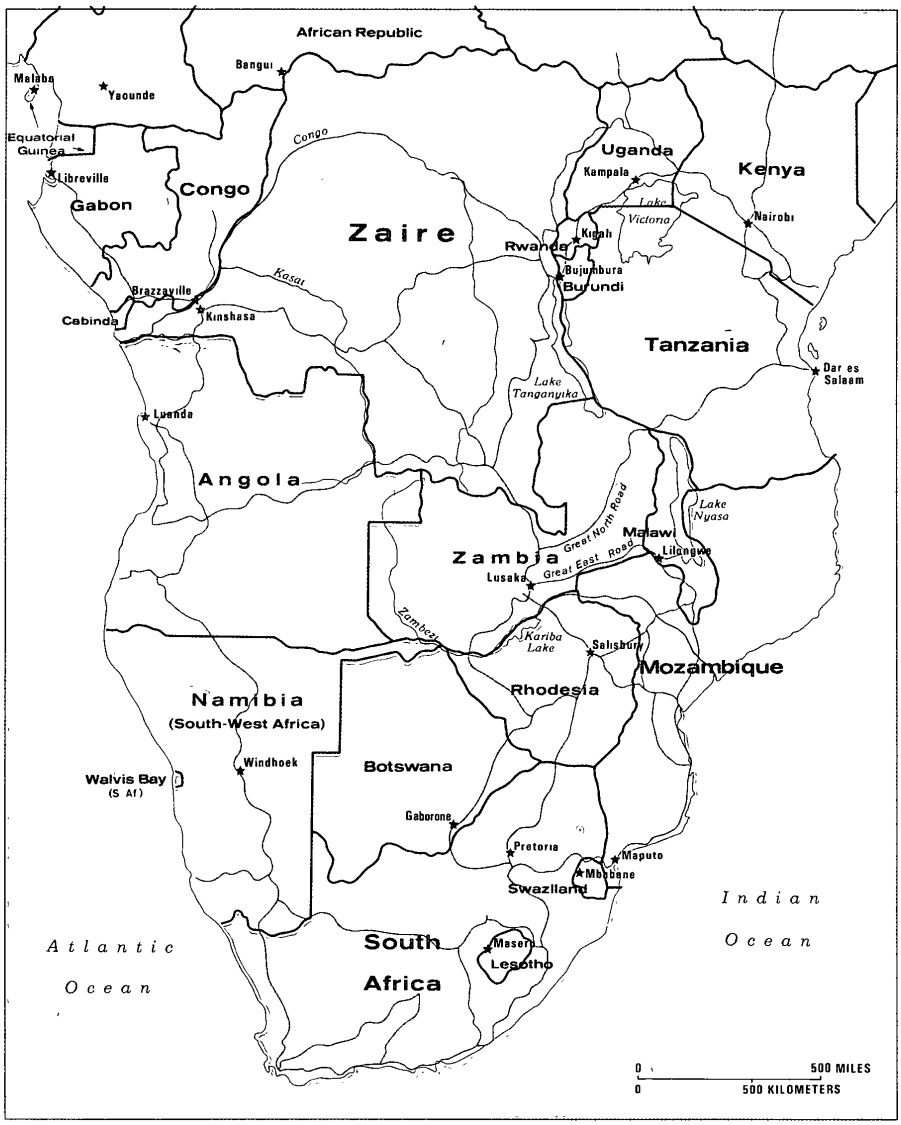

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ANGOLA: *The current offensive by government forces in southern Angola against guerrillas of the National Union appears to be the most ambitious effort so far on the part of the Neto regime to establish control over an area of the country in which it has no ethnic or political links.*

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The government forces are said to have sealed the Angola-Namibia border, reducing the flow of refugees across it to a trickle. The National Union's supply lines from South African military sources in northern Namibia may have been cut in the process. The South Africans have been providing modest assistance to the National Union.

The South Africans have been counting on the National Union to keep Angolan government forces on the defensive in that area in the hope of slowing down an expected buildup of SWAPO forces for intensified insurgency into Namibia. The current offensive, however successful, almost certainly will not wipe out the insurgency of Jonas Savimbi's National Union. The guerrillas will simply fade deeper into the southern Angolan countryside where they can count on support from the local population.

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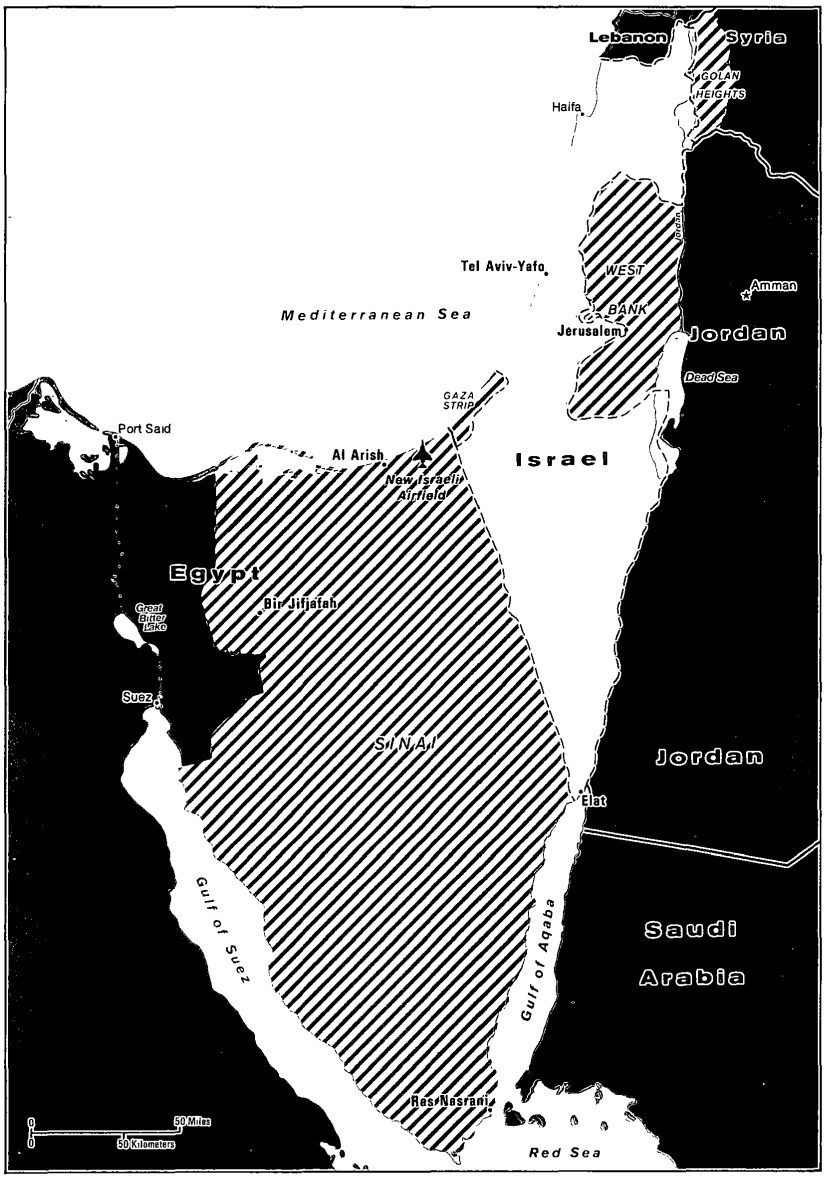

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NOTES

Recent construction activity at the Plesetsk missile test center suggests that the Soviets plan to resume testing the mobile version of their SS-X-16 ICBM.

The new facilities appear to be for crew training, but the final Soviet decision on fielding a mobile ICBM probably will depend on the outcome of the SALT II negotiations. If an agreement based on the Vladivostok Accords is reached, the Soviets probably will not field a mobile ICBM, at least in the near term.

The Soviets would be limited to 2,400 delivery vehicles and would have to dismantle fixed ICBM launchers or other systems to compensate for the mobile ICBM launchers. Mobile ICBMs would probably not significantly enhance the capability of Soviet strategic forces, and their operating costs are considerably higher.

* * *

A major new Israeli airfield in northern Sinai apparently is now in operation.

The airfield has been under construction for about two years and will be able to handle any aircraft currently in the Israeli inventory. When fighter squadrons are assigned to the field, the Israelis will have two airfields in the Sinai with fighter units permanently assigned to them; the other field is near Elat on the Gulf of Aqaba.

Two other bases, Bir Jifjafah and Ras Nasrani, are also used periodically by Israeli fighters. Israel's fighter force has grown by more than 25 percent since the war in October 1973, and the new field will help relieve the congestion.

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Fighting continues in various parts of Lebanon, *although Beirut remains fairly quiet.*

Syrian peacekeeping forces resumed their advance into Beirut today, where they are to take up positions along the main confrontation line.

The area around Tripoli in the north is still tense, and there was fighting in the south yesterday where the Israelis acknowledged shelling some Palestinian positions from across the border. Both the Israelis and Christians have been bombarding Bint Jubayl, the one remaining Palestinian foothold in the extreme south, off and on for days in an apparent effort to prevent the Palestinians from reinforcing it.

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